

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A communication device for communicating in video and audio with another terminal device, comprising:

5 mode setting means for setting a first operation mode for unassisted operation or a second operation mode for operation under the control of an external data processor;

10 an external connection interface for connecting with said external data processor;

operation means;

communication means for exchanging information with said other terminal device;

video input means;

15 video output means;

audio input/output means; and

control means that operates in accordance with an operation through said operation means and outputs video data to be displayed to said video output means
20 in said first operation modes, and operates in accordance with control commands received from said external data processor through said external connection interface and transfers video data to be displayed to said external data processor in said
25 second operation mode.

2. A device according to Claim 1, wherein said

mode setting means automatically sets said first operation mode after power is supplied and sets said second operation mode in accordance with a control instruction from said external data processor.

5

3. A device according to Claim 1, wherein said mode setting means sets said first operation mode in response to the connection state with said external data processor changing to a substantially disconnected state.

10

4. A device according to Claim 1, wherein said control means operates also in accordance with a control signal from said external data processor in said first operation mode.

15

5. A device according to Claim 1, further comprising:

a recording medium; and

20 recording management means for recording data to be recorded in said external data processor when said recording medium has its space area less than a predetermined amount, and recording, on said recording medium, management information indicating that said data is recorded in said external data processor.

25

6. A device according to Claim 5, wherein said

recording management means checks on the basis of said management information as to whether or not data to be reproduced exists in said recording medium, and reproduces said data when it exists in said recording medium and requests said external data processor to transfer said data when it exists in said external data processor.

7. A control method of a communication device for communicating in video and audio with another terminal device, said communication device having a first operation mode in which said communication device operates on the basis of an operation through its own operation means and a second operation mode in which said communication device operates under the control of an external data processor, said method comprising:

an operation mode setting step;

a first operation step for operating said communication device in accordance with an operation through said operation means when said first operation mode is set in said operation mode setting step;

a display output step for outputting video data to be displayed to a video output device provided in said communication device;

a second operation step for operating said communication device in accordance with control commands from said external data processor when said

second operation mode is set in said operation mode setting step; and

a transfer step for transferring video data to be displayed to said external data processor.

5

8. A method according to Claim 7, wherein said first operation mode is automatically set after power is supplied and said second operation mode is set in accordance with a control instruction from said external data processor in said operation mode setting step.

9. A method according to Claim 7, wherein said first operation mode is set in response to the connection state with said external data processor changing to a substantially disconnected state in said operation mode setting step.

10. A method according to Claim 7, wherein said communication device operates also in accordance with a control signal from said external data processor in said first operation mode.

11. A method according to Claim 7, further comprising a recording management step for recording data to be recorded in said external data processor when a recording medium has its space area less than a

predetermined amount, and recording, on said recording medium, management information indicating that said data is recorded in said external data processor.

5 12. A method according to Claim 7, further comprising a reproducing step for checking on the basis of said management information as to whether or not data to be reproduced exists in said recording medium, and reproducing said data when it exists in said
10 recording medium and requesting said external data processor to transfer said data when it exists in said external data processor.

15 13. A communication device for communicating in video and audio with another terminal device, comprising:

mode setting means for setting a first operation mode for unassisted operation or a second operation mode for operation under the control of an external
20 data processor;

external connection interface means for connecting with said external data processor;

operation means;

communication means for exchanging information
25 with said other terminal device;

video input means;

video output means;

audio input/output means; and

control means provided with a processor for
controlling each of said means,

wherein, in said first mode, said control means
5 makes a control such that a control menu and video data
to be displayed are output to said video output means
and said control means executes a predetermined
operation in accordance with pieces of operation
information from said operation means and pieces of
10 operation information from said external data processor
and,

in said second mode, said control means transfers
video data to be displayed to said external data
processor through said external connection interface
15 means to display said video data on a display device
provided for said external data processor and receives
control information based on an operation to operation
means provided for said external data processor through
said external connection interface means and controls
20 it to operate in accordance with said control means.